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Soviets use passenger planes to spy on U.S., Clark charges

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The Soviets "and their surrogates" are using passenger aircraft for espionage "and have overflown the United States on spying missions," William P. Clark, President Reagan's national security adviser, charged yesterday.

"Neither our nor any government which holds life precious would consider mass murder as a response," Clark said, using a rare public appearance to denounce the Soviet Union for shooting down a South Korean commercial airliner on Sept. 1 and killing its 269 passengers and crew members.

Clark also alleged that the Soviets, in contending that the Korean plane was spying, have embarked on a "big lie" campaign through their own statements and those of "their apologists both here and abroad" to shift blame away from themselves and onto the United States and its allies for the airliner incident "and, we believe, they will take further initiatives to cover up."

"The absolute and incontrovertible fact is that KAL 007 was not on an intelligence-gathering mission of any kind," Clark said, asserting that the Soviets "have asked the world to believe the big lie — and some seem to have done so."

Earlier yesterday, President Reagan

urged the International Civil Aviation Organization to adopt "a solid resolution" condemning the Soviets and holding them responsible for destruction of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 when the airliner strayed into Soviet air space over Sakhalin Island in the Sea of Japan.

J. Lynn Helms, head of the Federal Aviation Administration, who will lead the United States delegation at the ICAO session called at the request of the South Korean government, predicted during a White House news briefing that the international organization will launch an inquiry into the incident.

Clark, appearing at the annual convention of the Air Force Association to accept an award for the president, said the Soviets "ask the world to believe the unbelievable: that an innocent stray plane was on a spy mission in the dark of night over Soviet Union islands."

A senior administration official declined to comment on Clark's statements directly, but he confirmed that passenger planes from communist countries have intruded on United States air space along unauthorized flight paths.

Flights to and from the United States by the Soviet airline, Aeroflot, were suspended for seven days in late 1981, the official said, after inbound and outbound Aeroflot flights between Moscow

and Dulles International Airport on Nov. 8, 1981, "deliberately diverted" from authorized routes and flew over Pease Air Force Base in New Hampshire.

In addition, the official said, a Cuban Airline plane left its prescribed route on one occasion and flew over huge naval facilities in Connecticut — the Electric Boat Company's submarine construction yard at Groton and the Navy submarine base at New London — during launching of a new nuclear-powered submarine.

The official made one direct reference to Clark's speech, however — to contend the national security adviser's remarks on the Soviet propaganda campaign to counter bad publicity over the airline shootdown were "in there for good reason."

"In the past," Clark said, "when the Soviets have committed their most egregious crimes, they and their apologists both here and abroad have attempted to turn such incidents somehow into the blame of the United States and its allies. In this case, they are well-embarked upon just such a mission and, we believe, they will take further initiatives to cover up."

Clark warned that the Soviets may "fabricate so-called 'newly discovered evidence' to prove the spy plane thesis."

"Already, they are stating and will further spread the word that the airline massacre was the result of strained U.S.-Soviet relations," Clark cautioned. "They will . . . blame that relationship on our government's actions and suggest that a summit is called for to reach a 'greater understanding.'"

Clark also said the Soviets "are trying to convince 'apologists' that the Korean airliner's accidental intrusion on Soviet air space was a 'provocative act,' that forced their military to take 'appropriate action,' and that the Soviets were spreading 'disinformation about Soviet paranoia' as an excuse for their actions."